artsLONDON news

WEBSITE CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM – USER MANUAL
Russell Merryman – January 2010

Introduction

The main function of the content management system, or CMS, is to allow web pages to be built and managed without all that tedious mucking about in HTML code.

In the early days of the web, pages were built by hand using HyperText Mark-up Language to define the page elements, the font size and layout.

In the late 1990s content management systems were developed so that anyone could build a web page, and these have been refined over the last decade, especially by the blogging sites like Blogger and Wordpress.

Such is the development that some of the tools are becoming standardised. The Arts London News CMS is a custom build for LCC, but uses many of these standardised tools, especially in the page builder.

Getting started

To begin with you need a login and password – when you have these open a browser window (Firefox is best) and go to **http://cms.artslondonnews.co.uk** – and insert the username and password. (The training system is on **http://jrn-cms.arts.local**).

Don't forget to input the Captcha letters/numbers carefully, this confirms you are a human and stops rogue software logging on to our system. The ALN CMS does not use individual passwords, but we have different levels of access depending on the job function:

- reporter – can create pages, and upload images, videos and other assets;
- subeditor – can create and edit pages, upload and edit assets, and manage indexes;
- editor – can create and edit pages, upload and edit assets, manage indexes and publish content to the live site

Once you have logged in, you will see a number of options – the main working areas you need to create a page are under “Assets” and “Content”.

Uploading assets

Before you can create a page you need to ensure there are assets available, such as images, video, audio, flash animations (SWF), or files like documents (PDF & Word).

If you know these assets already exist, then you can move straight to creating a page, but if you have specific assets, then you will need to upload them to the database first.

This section will cover uploading an image; but for the other asset types the process is roughly the same.

Click on “Assets” and then “Image”, this will bring up a two-part page; on the left is the uploader, on the right is the library or previously uploaded images.

With every new image, you must ensure it has been optimised for use on the web, using image-editing software such as Photoshop to ensure every picture is:

- Cropped or re-sized to a maximum width of 600 pixels;
- Has a resolution of 72 dots per inch (or pixels per inch (ppi));
- If you want to use the image on an index page, it should have the correct aspect ratio of 6:4 – the height should be two-thirds of the width.

This can also be done by using the “Save for Web” option in Photoshop's File menu – also make sure that the image is no bigger than 50 KB to allow quick loading of your page.

Older CMSs needed all images at specific sizes before being used, which meant an image may have had to be uploaded in several sizes; the ALN CMS does not need that, and so images are uploaded once and re-sized in each page they are used.

When the picture is prepared, it can be put into the database using the uploader:

- Click “Browse” and find the picture on your computer; click “Select” - remember you cannot upload multiple images;
- Give the image a name – this should be no more than 15 characters and should be relevant – this is the name that appears on the picture in the library;
- Insert the photographer's name or image source – so the picture can be credited;

- Insert a description – the rule here is that the more information you provide, the easier it will be to find the picture and use it again; so basic details like what the picture shows, where it was taken, when it was taken should be put in here;

- Select a category – which section is it for (news, sport, features, etc...);

- Allocate to a group – you must ensure the “Shared” box is ticked

When you are happy that all the information is there, click on “Save” and the picture will be uploaded to the library – when the process is finished the upload form will clear, ready for a new upload, and the new image will appear in the library.

Remember: The editorial staff of Arts London News changes every term, so the more information you can provide about every asset, the easier it will be for these assets to be re-used by future editorial teams if stories are updated or developed further.

In the library you can use keywords entered into the search box to find relevant pictures, clicking on the thumbnail of each picture will bring up a preview with the original file name, clicking on “Edit” will take you to the database entry for that image.

When you click “Edit” you will see a full-size version of the image, and you can click on the [+] box below it to see the Image details; senior staff will be able to edit these details.

At the top of this page is a basic image editing system, but normally this is not used, although it will be covered in the advanced section.

Once the image is in the library, it can be used on the site when you build a new page.

Making a new page

This is a two stage process – first you have create the page holder, then you have to create the content of the page.

Part 1: Creating the Page

Under the “Content” button click on “Create a New Page” and the 'Page Info' form will appear – this gives the CMS all the data about the page you are making, and it is very important to fill this in properly so that your page can be found by search engines.

Then you need to:

- Select a layout - “3 Column (Article)” is the normal one. DO NOT select “3 column (Menu)”, which is for indexes only;

- Insert a name – this is for internal use only, but put in brackets which section the page is meant for (News, Features, Lifestyle, Sport, etc...);

- Insert a page title – this is the headline that will appear at the top of the page;

- Insert a URL – this can be used by search engines, so use keywords to make it relevant. We also put the date (in reverse order, yyyymmdd) in to allow easy page management, followed by keywords separated by hyphens, so for example:
  - 20091130-course-cuts-student-occupation;
  - 20100110-university-hub-move-holburn;

- Insert a description, this should be a summary of the story in 30 words or less – this will appear in the search results, and be used on the indexes, so it must be written properly and checked for typos;

- Insert some keywords – these should be done as single words, separated by a comma, and should repeat and extend the keywords in the URL, for example:
  - course, cuts, student, occupation, london, college, communication;
  - university, arts, london, hub, move, holburn; students;

- Insert the author name – this will become the byline;

- Make sure the page is searchable, and check whether you want people to be able to leave comments or not;

- Select a Thumbnail – this is for internal use only but allows index managers an easy visual way to see stories in the database;

- Select a category – place the story in the correct section;

- Allocate to a group allows you to only let certain users see the story – we do not use this, but you must make sure the 'Shared' box is ticked so it can be subbed and edited by another member of the team;

- Select a status – initially this should be “Draft”, once the page is ready for subbing this should be changed to “Submitted”. Once it has been subbed it will move to “Approved” and once checked by the output editor and/or a tutor, it will be “Published”. Any page that is no longer needed should be “Archived”.

Sometimes you may get an error message when you save the page at this point, if you do try reducing the length of the headline or the URL, as these can cause the page to be rejected if they are too long.

Once you are happy that all the information is entered and correct, click on “Save Page”

and the page will be created in the database and the outline template with the headline and byline will appear.

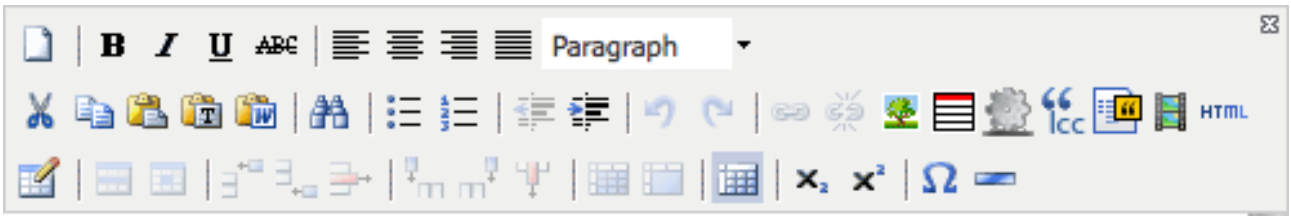
If you want to change any of this information, go back to the “Content” button, select “Page Management” and click the “Modify Info” button next to the page you wish to amend.

However once a page is published and on the live site, only someone with editor privileges may edit the page information.

Part 2: Creating the content

The page content goes in the large empty space in the centre of the page, click anywhere in that space and the production toolbar will appear at the top.

Many of the icons will be familiar to you if you have used any word processing or blogging software before, and many of them do exactly the same as they do in Microsoft Word:



The main ones we use are:

Bold, *Italic,* Underline and ~~Strikethrough~~

Left, Centre and Right alignment – DO NOT USE justify.

Bullet Lists and Numbered Lists, Decrease and Increase indents

Undo action and redo action

Insert special symbol (e.g. accented characters) and insert horizontal rule (places a line between paragraphs)

The website also uses a number of special functions:

Paste as plain text – see *'Inserting Text'* below

Create link and remove link – see *'Inserting a Link'* below

Insert/edit image – see *'Inserting an Image'* below.

Insert/edit Widget – see *'Inserting a Widget'* below.

Insert/edit Quote Box – see *'Inserting a Quote Box'* below.

Insert/edit Text Box – see *'Inserting a Text Box'* below.

Embed/edit a Video – see *'Embedding a Video'* below – only use this if you are inserting a video from a video sharing site such as YouTube or Vimeo – DO NOT USE IT for our own videos – they MUST be inserted as Widgets.

Insert/edit a Menu – see *'Inserting a Menu'* below.

Open HTML source editor – this will open up a pop-up which allows the basic Hyper Text Mark-up Language of the page to be edited directly – should only be used in an emergency.

Inserting text

Text can be entered directly via the keyboard, but it is more likely that you will be cutting and pasting your story text from a Word or text document.

When any text is copied from a Microsoft Word document (.doc), a rich text format document (.rtf) or any other source, including a web page, you will get hidden formatting which will affect the layout of your web page.

Therefore use the 'Paste as Plain Text' button to remove all of this unwanted formatting:

- Click 'Paste and plain text', and you will get a pop-up box;
- Uncheck the 'Keep Linebreaks' box;
- Paste your text into the open box, it will appear as plain text.
- Click on 'Insert' to place it into the page.

Inserting a Link

There are two kinds of links, internal and external – internal links point to pages within your own site (in our case *artslondonnews.co.uk*) while external links point to pages on other sites. To create a link:

- Copy the link address (or URL) of the page you wish to link to;
- In the age builder, write and highlight the text you want to use as the link;
- Click on the 'create link' you will get a pop-up;
- Insert the URL of the page you want to link to;
- Choose how the new, or target page opens:
  - If you are sending people to an external site, change the 'Target' to “Open in new window (.blank)”;
  - For internal links, leave it as “Open in same window”.

Highlighting an exiting link and clicking the 'create link' button allows you to edit an existing link, to remove the link highlight the existing link and click the 'remove link' button.

Inserting an Image

Every image used on the website should be inserted from the image gallery, so should have been uploaded there first. To insert an image:

- Position your cursor at the start of the paragraph that you want in line with the top of the picture;
- Click on the 'Insert Image' icon, which produces a pop-up box;
- In the pop-up box, click on the image icon on the right which pops up the image library selector, use search to find the correct image, then click on the image to

select it – the image should then appear in the 'Preview' box;

- Insert the Image description – this is the text used by low-graphics and text-to-speech browsers to describe the picture;
- Insert the Title – this is the caption that appears below the picture, along with the picture credit in square brackets;
- Then click on the 'Appearance' tab at the top of the pop-up box;
- Select the alignment – normally this would be “Align right” - you MUST choose an alignment (left or right) so the text flows correctly around the image;
- Select a size – the basic size should already be in these boxes, change the width to the appropriate size (usually 300 wide) and ensure the 'Constrain proportions' box is ticked so the height is calculated automatically
- Once everything is done, click 'Insert' and the picture will be inserted into the page.

NOTE: In the ALN CMS, picture captions do not appear until the page is published, even in page preview, so do not worry that they cannot be seen immediately.

If you wish to edit the image at any time after it is inserted, click on the picture so the squares appear around the edge, then click on the 'Insert/edit image' icon and the pop-up containing all the relevant details will appear ready for editing.

To delete it, click on it so the squares appear around the edge, then hit 'Delete'.

Inserting a Widget

A widget is just a special container for multimedia content, such as video, audio, slide-shows and polls; all of these can be built inside the CMS so that multimedia content is presented in a consistent fashion across the whole site.

While video, audio and images may have already been uploaded to the asset library, they need special containers, or players, so they can be controlled by the user.

Widgets must be created in specifically before use, and the creation of widgets is covered later in this guide. To insert a widget:

- Position your cursor at the place you want to insert your widget; if you want the text to wrap around it, place the cursor at the start of the paragraph you want the top of the widget to be in line with;

- Click the 'Insert/edit widget' icon, which produces a pop-up box;
- Find the widget you want and click on 'Select';
- The pop-up will close and the widget will be inserted into the page.

NOTE: The widget itself cannot be seen until the page is save and previewed; in the page builder it will appear as a yellow box with the widget icon in the centre to show where it appears in the page so it can be aligned correctly.

If you wish to delete the widget at any time after it is inserted, click on the yellow widget box so the squares appear around the edge, then hit 'Delete'.

Inserting a Quote Box

A quote box is a special text box used to highlight key quotes from a story, it has a specific design which is consistent with the rest of the website. To insert a quote box:

- Position your cursor at the start of the paragraph that you want in line with the top of the quote box;
- Click on the 'Insert Quote Box' icon, which produces a pop-up box;
- In the pop-up box, write the name of the person you are quoting in the 'Title' box, this should then appear in the 'Preview' box;
- In the 'Quote text' box write (or paste in) the quote – remember the quotation marks;
- Check the alignment – this should be “Right”;
- Once everything is done, click 'Insert' and the quote box will be inserted into the page.

Once the quote box is inserted it can be edited in the page like any other piece of text, that goes for the title as well.

To delete a quote box, place your cursor just after the first letter of the paragraph it is in line with, then backspace two or three times, and the box will disappear, then re-insert the missing letters.

Inserting a Text Box

Text Boxes are like Quote boxes, but without a title. They can be used for bullet-point facts, links to related stories, short-form data.

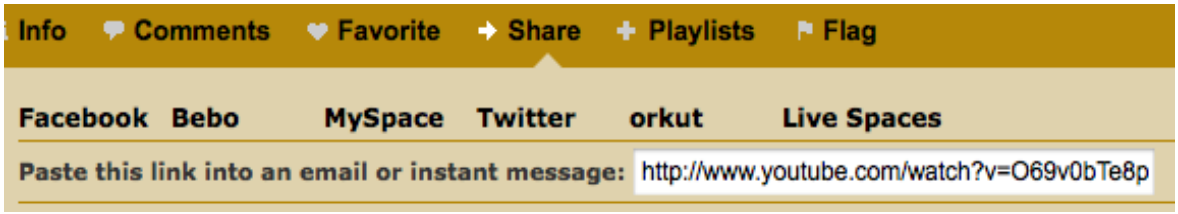
They are inserted in much the same way as a Quote Box, and can be edited in the page after being inserted. They are deleted in the same fashion.

Embedding a video

This applies to videos that are already on the web and can be shared, or embedded, from websites such as YouTube.

Before embedding you will need to get the link address, or URL, of the video you want to embed, this is usually provided by the website hosting the original video.

Look for something like this on the page next to the video you want to embed:



Beware that you should only use a video if embedding has been allowed, and you should fully credit every video.

Take a copy of the link provided, then go back to your web page builder. To embed a video:

- Position your cursor in the place you want your video, but NOT at the start of a paragraph;
- Click on the 'Embed Video' icon, which produces a pop-up box;
- In the pop-up box, choose the media type – normally, if the video is from YouTube, Vimeo or Brightcove, this will be Flash, which is the default setting;
- In the 'File/URL' box paste in the link address, the video should then appear in the preview box;
- The size of the video should appear automatically in the 'Dimensions' boxes, if you want to change these you can but remember to tick the 'Constrain Proportions' box so the video remains the same shape;

- Once everything is done, click 'Insert' and the quote box will be inserted into the page.

NOTES: As with the widgets any flash video will appear as a yellow box with the Flash symbol in the centre, and it can be aligned using the alignment buttons in the tool bar.

Any video more than 400 pixels wide should be centred and stand-alone, i.e. it should have no text wrapped around it.

To edit the video, click on the yellow box so the small squares appear around the edge, then click the 'Embed video' button again to get the pop-up box again. If you want to delete it, click on it to get the squares, then hit 'Delete'.

Insert a Menu

Menus are inserted into stories if you have a large, long-running story with several sidebars; they are an easy way to pull together a large number of links into a single asset.

To use a menu it would first have to be built inside the Menu Management part of the CMS, and then inserted using the 'Insert Menu' icon.

Normally this would be done under the supervision of a tutor.

Page creation

Using all the tools available, the page can be created as you wish, and assets inserted as required; do make sure that you try to break text up with images, cross heads and quote boxes, and place related links at the bottom of the text.

Save the page regularly using the button at the top right of the page-maker, as soon as a page is saved, it can be previewed using the 'Preview' button; this will open up a full preview version in a new tab.

Remember that until a page is published fully, you will not be able to see the picture captions, but you can check them by placing your cursor on the picture, and the caption with credit will appear as a tool tip next to the cursor.

Also remember that the plain text used in the page builder is smaller than the text on the final website – the page builder uses 8pt Verdana, the page text is 12pt Arial, so all images and boxes may be further apart when the final page is rendered out by the CMS.

Managing Pages

Once pages are made they are stored in the 'Page Management' area of the CMS; the most recently updated pages appear at the top but the database can be searched using keywords or filtered by various criteria so you can find older stories.

To change any of the page details, such as the workflow status, click on 'Modify Info' on the right of each page entry, this will bring up the 'Page Info' which can then be amended as required – remember to click 'Save Page' once you have made the changes.

Also on each page you can 'Edit' the page, which re-opens the Page builder, or see a 'Preview' of the page as it was last saved.

Managing Menus

Once pages are built, approved and published, they need to placed into the website's menus so they can be reached by the reader.

In some content management systems, once a page is built that becomes a single unit and the section managers simply have to pull that story into a menu for it to appear.

In the ALN CMS we do not have that direct link, so a menu item has to be built for each page, in every menu it appears in; this sounds like a long process but it is relatively simple.

All of this happens in the 'Menu Management' area under the 'Content' button, and for each menu that has been created you can 'Preview' it (a pop-up window will show up what the menu will look like, not the whole menu page), 'Edit' it or 'Delete' it.

Depending on your level of rights access, you will not see all of these options, but if you do see them, DO NOT DELETE a menu without express permission from your tutor.

For a new menu item, there is a two-stage process:

<u>Part 1: Creating the menu item</u>

In the Menu manager, click on 'Edit' against the menu you want to update, you will then get a three-part page.

At the top is the area where you can edit the information about the menu itself; like every page, each menu also has information stored about what it is and what it does.

Even if your login allows you to see this part of the page, you should not touch this without referring to a tutor first.

Below that is the area where new menu items can be created, click on the [+] sign and a

small form will appear.

In this form you need to:

- Select the position on the menu where you want the new item to appear – we only manually manage the first 10 items, anything below that is on 'Auto' and appears in date order, newest first;
- Then click on 'Select a Page', this will bring up a pup-up of the page management system so you can select which page you want the menu item to refer to – when you click on the page you want, most of the details on the form will be filled in automatically;
- Write a 'Lead' paragraph summarising the story – this could be a copy of the 'Description' on the story itself – do remember this has to fit into the space available in the menu template, and these are different depending which position the item is in, so size this paragraph accordingly;
- Click on 'Select' to get an image – pick the image that will appear on the menu with the headline and lead;
- Once you have filled in all the elements, click on 'Save' and the item should then appear in the menu position you decided.

Part 2: Managing the menu

At the bottom of the menu manager is a list of the items already in the menu. The order of these items can be changed using the drop-down menus on the left of each item.

In the ALN CMS all menus are multi-page, apart from the Home Page, and each page contains 10 items; only the first ten are ordered manually, the rest are put on 'Auto' and appear in the order that their menu item was created.

If you have created a new item and placed it at Position 1, the other items should automatically move down a slot, and the item in Position 10 will switch to 'Auto' placement.

To move an item to a new slot, change the position number next to it, then give the page time to refresh.

Once you have made a change, make sure that the first ten items are all numbered 1 to 10 in the order you want.

Remember that the space for the lead paragraph on each menu item changes depending

on which slot the item is in, so once you have made a change, preview the menu using the button at the top left of the menu manager page and check all the lead paragraphs fit before moving on.

If you need to amend the lead paragraph, or any of the other menu item information, click on '[+] Edit' on the right of each item to access the menu information – change what is needed and click 'Save' when you have finished.

Also remember that if you want to place an item on the Home Page, the output editor will need to repeat this process with the Home Page.

The Home Page is different in that it only has 12 items on it, and is not allowed to go to multiple pages, so in this case, old menu items may be deleted.

– ends –

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APPENDIX 1

USING THE GOOGLE AD MANAGER FOR ADVERTS ON THE WEBSITE

Access to Ad Manager

You need to logon to Google Ad Manager by going to www.google.com/admanager – the username and password will be provided by the teaching staff.

At the start of each term

Every term needs a new set of inventory, which AdManager calls an Order. Work with the online tutor to set this up, once in place it will be your responsibility to manage the content.

Navigating through AdManager

Existing orders are listed on the first page, they have a standard naming convention, Year-Term, but the current one should be highlighted and its status should read “Delivering”.

To see the content of each order, click on the name, this brings up a list of outlets, in our case there is only one; *Arts London News*. Click on the name to see the ad inventory.

Inside you should see all the adverts currently available to the website - ad’s on this application are referred to as 'Creatives'.

Advert types

The website has three types of advert, measured in pixels, width first:

- Banner (horizontal) 468 x 60
- Skyscraper (vertical) 120 x 450
- Mid-Page Unit (MPU) 300 x 250

These are industry standard sizes, and most advertisers will be able to supply artwork in the appropriate size.

If they are not supplied in the correct size, you will need to re-size them before uploading them to AdManager.

If adverts are supplied for print only (e.g. full-page newspaper adverts) you can use Photoshop to create web-specific ones, the picture desk may be able to help with this.

Uploading new adverts

To upload your new adverts click on 'Upload Creatives', which is at the top of the page above the pause and cancel buttons.

Then choose what sort of file you want to upload, flash, plain image or rich media. You then browse for the image on your computer and select which one you want to upload.

Then copy the URL of the website the advert is for into the URL space then select the size of advert so that a space for it can be made. Give it a name based on the advertiser's name and the kind of advert it is (banner, skyscraper, MPU), for example:

- TfL Suburbia SKYSCRAPER
- Nandos MPU

Also try and name the files you're going to be uploading accurately on your computer so when it’s uploaded you will know what each advert is from the name.

Then click save and carry on the same process for the rest of the adverts.

Managing existing adverts

Once an advert has been uploaded it will appear in the inventory listing, and can be edited at any time by clicking on the advert name.

Remember that the website will choose adverts in a cycle from the inventory available, so you will need at least eight different advertisers to avoid duplication of adverts on a single page.

If an advert is only valid for a certain period of time, it can be taken off the available inventory list by checking the box to the left if the name, and then clicking the 'Make Inactive' button at the top of the listing.

DO NOT delete ads once they are finished with, as we need to keep a record of which ads were run, and what traffic they generated.